

Final Recommendation
June 8, 2000

Recommendation of the Action Plan Team: CORE Mission

State of Issue #14: There is a need to enhance the collection of comprehensive data to support USFA and partner/customer analysis and policy decisions.

Recommendation #: R-67

Summary:

R-67 “Identify the Statistical Validity of NFIRS data published in reports.”

Recommendation:

Dedicate requisite USFA resources annually to NFIRS data verification in support of validation studies. Publish findings as they become available.

Background:

Due to limited resources, fire data analysts using NFIRS have been forced to accept the assumption that unknown incident attributes are distributed similarly to known incident attributes. To determine how valid an assumption this is, there is a project beginning at the National Fire Data Center (NFDC) that will address this issue, using additional funds recently made available.

Priority:

High

1. Establish a mechanism within the NFDC by which selected missing or questionable incident data are verified by directly contacting the reporting fire department or other practicable means.
2. After enough data have been verified, staff analysts will perform a validation study, testing the hypothesis that unknown entries are distributed similarly to known entries.
3. Findings will be shared freely with all interested parties, and included in all USFA analytical documents based upon NFIRS data.

Estimated Time Frame:

Step 1: One year/ongoing
Step 2: Three months
Step 3: Ongoing

Estimated Cost:

Step 1: \$300,000.00
Step 2: Staff Time
Step 3: Staff Time

Outcome: This would be the first known empirical validation of the NFIRS dataset since its inception. NFIRS data users, including the USFA, other government agencies, non-profit organizations and academic analysts, would be able to rigorously defend conclusions based on the NFIRS dataset. The stature of the dataset will increase among analysts. As more credible findings are published, an increased awareness of the dataset will hopefully lead to increased participation in the NFIRS system, and enhance the overall quality of the data.

Conclusion: The Core Mission Team supports this recommendation.

Submitted by:

Core Mission Action Plan Team:

Team Leader and Team Members: Pam Kemenyas
Bob McCarthy
Bruce Hisley
Wayne Powell
Jim Heeschen
Julie Davis
Elsie Davis

APPROVED/Date

DISAPPROVED/Date